

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Safety and Enforcement Division  
Rail Transit and Crossings Branch  
Rail Crossings Engineering Section

RESOLUTION SX-110  
May 1, 2014

**RESOLUTION**

RESOLUTION SX-110 GRANTING AUTHORIZATION TO  
DEVIATE FROM THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 12.1 OF  
GENERAL ORDER 26-D REQUIRING A MINIMUM VERTICAL  
CLEARANCE OF 15 FEET ABOVE THE ROADWAY AT THE  
GRADE-SEPARATED HIGHWAY-RAIL CROSSINGS AT MONTE  
DIABLO AVENUE AND TILTON AVENUE IN THE CITY OF SAN  
MATEO IN SAN MATEO COUNTY.

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**SUMMARY**

By letter dated January 17, 2014, and submitted on February 26, 2014, the San Mateo County Transit District requests an exemption from the provisions of Section 12.1, Vertical Clearance for Public Roads Crossing Under Tracks, of General Order 26-D for not meeting the required vertical clearance at two grade-separated crossings in the City of San Mateo. San Mateo County Transit District, a funding agency of Caltrain, has a project to raise the Caltrain tracks in the vicinity, enabling two of four rail bridges to meet General Order 26-D minimum vertical clearance requirements. The remaining two bridges will be raised as well, but not enough to meet the required 15-foot vertical clearance requirement. The exemptions will apply to the following crossings:

1. Monte Diablo Avenue, San Mateo
2. Tilton Avenue, San Mateo

**BACKGROUND**

There are currently four historical grade-separated rail crossings in the City of San Mateo which do not meet the General Order (GO) 26-D minimum vertical clearance requirement of 15 feet for roadways under the tracks. These four underpass crossings are identified as:

1. Poplar Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.20-B, SM-1153, DOT No. 754896L)
2. Santa Inez Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.30-B, SM-1154, DOT No. 754897T),
3. Monte Diablo Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.40-B, SM-1155, DOT No. 754898A)
4. Tilton Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.50-B, SM-1069, DOT No. 754899G).

These rail bridges have been struck by vehicles passing beneath the structures, disrupting freight and passenger rail service. The project will raise the elevation of the tracks, enabling the Poplar Avenue and Santa Inez Avenue crossings to meet the GO 26-D vertical clearance requirement.

San Mateo County Transit District (Caltrain) will raise the minimum vertical clearance at the Monte Diablo Avenue crossing from 11 feet – 1 inch to 13 feet – 2 inches. Caltrain will raise the minimum vertical clearance at the Tilton Avenue crossing from 8 feet – 6 inches to 8 feet – 7 inches.

The impaired clearances at the two structures is well marked for motorists in advance of the underpasses, and the increased clearances will reduce the potential for further contact between vehicles and the bridge structures.

**DISCUSSION**

Caltrain operates 92 passenger trains per day at the crossings with a maximum speed limit of 79 MPH. Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) operates approximately 4 freight trains per day at the crossings with a maximum speed limit of 50 MPH. Section 12.1 of GO 26-D requires a minimum vertical clearance of 15 feet for public roadways crossing beneath railroad tracks.

In its letter dated January 17, 2014, Caltrain requested exemptions from the minimum vertical clearance requirements for the Monte Diablo Avenue and Tilton Avenue grade-separated highway-rail crossings.

The two grade-separated crossings at Monte Diablo Avenue and Tilton Avenue will be raised, providing a greater clearance than existing conditions, but not enough to meet the required GO 26-D minimum vertical clearance. These two crossings are in close proximity to downtown San Mateo and the San Mateo Caltrain station. Caltrain states in its request letter "It is recognized that this is not in compliance with GO 26-D, however the roadway clearance is being increased as much as possible given the constraints of the rail profile above and the maximum allowable grades." Raising the rail bridges at Monte Diablo Avenue and Tilton Avenue further would require elevating the nearby Caltrain station and numerous roadways within downtown San Mateo at significant additional cost that could not be funded within current funding limits. The proposed project results in an improvement over existing conditions.

The City of San Mateo has been served a copy of this request and indicates no objection to the requested exemption.

### **NOTICE**

On March 25, 2014, the San Mateo County Transit District's request was published in the Commission's Daily Calendar.

### **COMMENTS**

The draft Resolution of the Safety and Enforcement Division in this matter was mailed in accordance with Section 311 of the Public Utilities Code and Rule 14.2 (c) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. No comments were received.

### **FINDINGS**

1. Caltrain requested, by letter dated January 17, 2014, exemption from the GO 26-D required minimum vertical clearance of 15 feet for roadways passing beneath railroad tracks at the Monte Diablo Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.40-B, SM-1155, DOT No. 754898A) and Tilton Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.50-B, SM-1069, DOT No. 754899G) crossings of their tracks in the City of San Mateo.

May 1, 2014

2. Monte Diablo Avenue and Tilton Avenue crossings are in close proximity to downtown San Mateo and the San Mateo Caltrain station.
3. Raising the rail bridges at Monte Diablo Avenue and Tilton Avenue further would require elevating the Caltrain station and numerous roadways within downtown San Mateo.
4. Staff has reviewed the proposal and finds that the request has merit and should be granted.

**THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:**

1. The San Mateo County Transit District is authorized to deviate from the provisions of Section 12.1 of General Order 26-D requiring a minimum vertical clearance of 15 feet above the roadways to the rail bridge structures at the Monte Diablo Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.40-B, SM-1155, DOT No. 754898A) and Tilton Avenue (CPUC No. 105E-17.50-B, SM-1069, DOT No. 754899G) highway-rail crossings in the City of San Mateo, as specifically described in its request and outlined herein.
2. This resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 1, 2014. The following Commissioners voted favorably thereon:

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PAUL CLANON  
Executive Director